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INCLUDING

CEYLON AND BURMA:

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L O N D O N :

TAYLOR AND FRANCIS, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

March, 1929.

Young birds are dull buff above, irregularly barred with blackish brown; there is a small pale supercilium but no black on the crown; the breast is dull rufous, more or less barred with blackish; chin and abdomen white.

Distribution. The drier, more open and desert portions of India from North Ceylon to North-West India and Western Bengal. It is common in the deforested parts of Travancore but is rare on the Malabar coast and, again, is absent from the pure desert country of Cutch, Sind and the North-West Province.

Nidification. The Indian Courser breeds in Central India from April to June, in Western India from March to July and in Travancore principally in May and June. No nest is made, the eggs being laid on the bare ground either among pebbles and rubbish on the coast, as in Malabar, or on ploughed fields, fallow fields or waste lands. Occasionally they may be found on rocky hill-sides in thin scrub but never on sandy deserts. The eggs are almost invariably two only in number and in colour exactly match the black soil and yellow débris on which they are laid. The ground-colour varies from a pale stone to a rich yellow-buff, whilst the markings consist of blotches and smears or endless lines and scriggles of black covering most of the ground-colour. In a few eggs the marks are more brown than black. Forty eggs average 30.7×24.0 mm.: maxima 34.1×23.9 and 31.5×26.1 mm.; minima 28.2×23.1 and 30.2×22.1 mm.

Habits. This Courser does not affect the driest areas with hardly any rainfall but, on the other hand, is seldom found in areas of heavy rainfall. It keeps to open country, cultivated and waste, or to such as is covered by thin scrub and tufty, scattered grass. It is a shy, wary bird except when incubating and runs away at great speed when disturbed. Its food is almost entirely insectivorous and its own flesh is said to be good to eat, though dry. As a rule it is found singly or in pairs but sometimes consorts in small flocks.

Genus **RHINOPTILUS.**

Rhinoptilus Strickland, P. Z. S., 1850, p. 220, Jan. 1852.

Type, *Cursorius bicinctus* Temm.

The genus differs from the last in its smaller bill, which is straight and rather broader at the base; the breast has two bands across it and the wing is rather rounder, with the second and third primaries longest and subequal.

The genus is strongly represented in Africa but in Asia there is but one species, a very rare form restricted to Southern India.

(2053) **Rhinoptilus bitorquatus.****JERDON'S COURSER.**

Rhinoptilus bitorquatus Blyth, J. A. S. B., xvii, pt. 1, p. 254 (1848)
ex Jerdon MS. (Eastern Ghats); Blanford & Oates, iv, p. 212.

Vernacular names. *Adava-wuta-titti* (Tel.).

Description. Forehead, supercilia and a broken central coronal streak pale buff or white; remainder of crown and hind-neck dark brown, surrounded by the pale buff; tail-coverts white; remainder of upper plumage, scapulars and inner secondaries brown; tail-feathers blackish, the outermost broadly white at the base and all the lateral feathers with white apical spots on the outer webs; median coverts paler grey-brown with broad white edges forming a conspicuous wing-bar; greater and primary coverts black; primaries black, the outermost with a broad white patch on the outer web, joining obliquely with a similar broad white sub-terminal patch on the inner web, the white decreasing to a small spot on the inner web of the fourth; outer secondaries black, broadly edged with white on the inner webs; chin and throat white; fore-neck rufous surrounded by a black-edged white band; breast brown with a broad white belt across the lower part; under wing-coverts black and white; axillaries, lower breast, flanks and abdomen creamy-white changing to white on the under tail-coverts.

The feathers of the upper parts are obsoletely edged paler and the wing-coverts more definitely so, a character possibly of the juvenile plumage.

Colours of soft parts. Iris dark brown; bill blackish-horny at the tips of both mandibles, pale yellow from the nostrils to the gape, legs pale yellowish-white with a fleshy tinge, soles flesh-coloured, nails horny.

Measurements. Wing 161 to 168 mm.; tail 64 to 65 mm.; tarsus 68 mm.; culmen 18 to 19 mm.

Distribution. The forest country from the Godavery Valley to the neighbourhood of Madras. Jerdon discovered it in Nellore and Cuddapah and Blanford obtained it close to Sironcha on the Godavery and again near Bhadrachalam, whilst, in 1900, Howard Campbell saw it near Anantpur, much farther West.

Nidification. An account in the 'Asian' describes the eggs as being laid on the ground, two in number, the ground-colour bright yellow-stone, almost obliterated by black scrawly blotches and spots. The birds were said to be breeding in thin scrub-jungle and to be very shy and wary.

Habits. Jerdon and Blanford both found this Courser in thin forest or scrub, whilst Campbell says he saw it twice, in pairs, running about in dry bush-jungle. On both occasions it ran away with great rapidity and did not take to wing. Blanford

says that it flies better than *Cursorius*, whilst Jerdon says it has a plaintive cry. Blanford's birds obtained in March and May were not breeding but Howard's male, the only one he managed to get, had very enlarged testes. This was in June, so presumably the birds breed about then.

Subfamily GLAREOLINÆ.

In this genus the bill is short, wide and rather high at the base, the culmen curved and the gape very large; the wings are long and narrow, the closed wing reaching to the tip of, or beyond, the tail; the first primary is longest; the tarsus is short, scutellate in front and behind; the hind toe is well developed and raised above the anterior toes at the base; lateral toes short, the outer and middle toe united by a small web; claws long, that of the middle toe pectinated on the inner margin.

Genus GLAREOLA.

Glareola, Brisson, Orn., i, p. 48 (1760).

Type by taut., *Hirundo pratincola* Linn.

Characters those of the subfamily.

Key to Species.

- A. Tail deeply forked; wing exceeding 170 mm.
 - a. Outer tail-feathers exceeding central tail-feathers by about 50 mm. *G. pratincola*, p. 89.
 - b. Outer tail-feathers exceeding central tail-feathers by 25 mm. or less. *G. maldivarum*, p. 90.
- B. Tail nearly even; wing under 170 mm. .. *G. lactea*, p. 92.

(2054) *Glareola pratincola pratincola*.

THE COLLARED PRATINCOLE.

Hirundo pratincola Linn., Syst. Nat., 12th ed., p. 345 (1766) (Austria).

Glareola pratincola. Blanf. & Oates, iv, p. 216.

Vernacular names. None recorded.

Description. Upper plumage brown, faintly tinged with olive, the back and sides of the neck more pale rufous; lores and a line under the eye running down the sides of the neck and in a narrow gorget across the upper breast black, indistinctly edged with white; rump and shorter tail-coverts white; longer tail-coverts brown with paler edges; tail black with broad white bases; chin and throat inside the gorget pale rufous; breast pal